

SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 4162

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 9, 2019

The Senate Environment and Energy Committee favorably reports Senate Bill No. 4162 with committee amendments.

This bill would establish the New Jersey Climate Change Resource Center at Rutgers, The State University (center) to carry out interdisciplinary research activities that will help New Jersey adapt and prepare for climate change.

The center would conduct research with a mission to advance government, public, private, and nongovernmental sector efforts to adapt to a changing climate. The center's research would include, but would need not be limited to:

(1) conducting a Statewide climate change vulnerability assessment to identify populations and assets most vulnerable to a changing climate;

(2) facilitating and coordinating, to the greatest extent possible, among New Jersey academic institutions collaborative applied research, development of educational programs, and Statewide integration of research findings into adaptation and resilience efforts;

(3) forming partnerships with practitioners in key economic sectors that are particularly vulnerable to climate change, including agriculture, public health, water resources, and the built and natural environment;

(4) undertaking actionable science that informs planning and policy-making at the local, State, and regional levels;

(5) developing and delivering technical guidance to practitioners to enhance adaptation and resilience in the public, private, and nongovernmental sectors;

(6) undertaking pilot projects that can be replicable throughout the State and that reduce the risks facing populations most vulnerable to climate change; and

(7) enhancing the State's capacity to address climate risks and impacts through outreach training, engagement, and education of policymakers, practitioners, the media, and other key stakeholders.

Within two years, the center would be required to provide a report to the Legislature summarizing its research and activities and identifying priorities for the next five years, including any additional resource needs.

The bill would also provide an initial appropriation from the General Fund in an amount not to exceed \$500,000 to reimburse the center for costs incurred in carrying out its responsibilities under the bill based on receipts submitted by the center to the Director of the Division of Budget and Accounting.

The committee amendments to the bill: revise the duties of the center; and reduce the amount of the appropriation from \$2 million to an amount not to exceed \$500,000.